

The Status Report

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Registration Now Open for June 9th Women, Wages & Work Policy Conference



Registration is now open for the not-to-be-missed June 9th Women, Wages and Work Policy Conference being sponsored by UMASS Boston's Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy. Plan to join hundreds of women from across the Commonwealth

for a day of exciting speakers and strategy sessions to close the wage gap; advocate for family friendly benefits, retirement security, and work/life balance; and examine how to get women what they need in child care and job training. The MCSW is a key planning partner of the Conference.

The conference will feature many prominent speakers, including **Lilly Ledbetter**, Plaintiff in the Supreme Court gender wage discrimination case: *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*; **Evelyn Murphy**, former Lt. Governor & author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid as Much as Men and What to Do About It*; **Teresa Heinz Kerry**, who will be honored for her trailblazing work on women's retirement security; **Suzanne Bump**, Secretary, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development; **Rocio Saenz**, President, SEIU Local 615; **Ann Bookman**, Executive Director, MIT Workplace Center; **Ellen Bruce**, Director, Pension Action Center, UMass Boston; and Senators Harriette Chandler and Patricia Jehlen and Representative Alice Wolf.

The Conference will also include strategy sessions on topics such as Closing the Wage Gap, Advocating for Yourself in the Workplace, Paid Family & Medical Leave, Easing the Childcare Burden for Working Parents, Job Skills Training, Retiring Planning and How to Become an Effective Advocate.

The day will also feature many dynamic and interactive activities, such as:

- Take the Wage Gap Quiz: Find out what you don't know and why you should care.
- Get trained to advocate for yourself on the job.
- Use the "Retirement Calculator" to learn how much the wage gap hurts you.
- Connect with local and statewide initiatives: Put your energies to work for women's economic equality.
- Take away a Resource Guide with information on "Best Practices," local, state and national initiatives, and advocacy groups.
- Register to vote at an on-site voter registration booth.
- Free information materials from supporting organizations and sponsors

To register or for more information on the conference, please visit: <http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/womenwages&work>. Scholarships and volunteer opportunities are available for those who would have trouble meeting the \$75 registration cost.

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Proud Member of the



Executive Director's Corner: Celebrating Unsung Heroines

*They don't make the news...
they make the difference.*



On May 14, The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women will honor 287 extraordinary women from across the Commonwealth at its Fifth Annual Unsung Heroines Event. Chosen from over 600 nominations, our Unsung Heroines of 2008 are representative of the countless contributions that the women of Massachusetts make each and every day.

Our Unsung Heroines use their time, their talent, their spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others. They are volunteers, mentors, innovators and selfless givers. They are the glue that keeps a community together, the spark that gets things started and the determination that gets things done. They care about other people and it shows. They may not make the news, but

they surely make the difference.

The Unsung Heroines of 2008 are being recognized for their efforts beyond the call of duty where they live or work. These women carry out their good deeds in all areas of everyday life. They are educators, public servants, work in health care, teach, take care of the young, the elderly and the less fortunate of our society. They are professional women who have made the time to assist others and they are women who have helped neighbors overcome problems. When there is a community tragedy, they are there to help. They turn their own personal tragedies into a call for action to help others, and often to bring a positive outcome to difficult situations. They see a need and rise to meet it, through fundraising, organizing, advocacy and sheer will.

Women comprise 52 percent of the population of Massachusetts. Heroines, both sung and unsung, are an important part of the fabric of our state. They keep our families together, our businesses growing, our nonprofits sustained and volunteer efforts strong. It is our privilege to honor these women. We thank the nominators, the corporate sponsors, and those who donated goods and services that make it possible for us to do so. You can find a complete listing of the Unsung Heroines of 2008 on our web site. If you see or know one of them, please join us in thanking her for helping to make Massachusetts a better place for all of us.

Linda Bantley



Commissioner Corner: Spotlight on Commissioner Catherine M. Greene, Esq.

Catherine M. Greene, Esq., MCSW Secretary, is the Director of Campaign & Major Gifts for the Perkins School for the Blind. Located in Watertown, MA, Perkins provides services to individuals who are blind, visually impaired and deafblind, each year reaching more than 92,000 people in 62 countries. Prior to joining Perkins, she was an advocate for victims of domestic and sexual violence. She served as the Director of Public Affairs and the interim Executive Director of Jane Doe, Inc., and also as the first Executive Director of the Family Justice Center.



Commissioner Greene received her B.A. in Political Science from Brown University and her law degree from Boston University School of Law. Greene was appointed to the MCSW in 2003 and she has been an active member of the Legislative Committee, the Chair of the Unsung Heroine initiative for the past two years, and an Officer and member of the Executive Committee for the past four years.

Equal Pay Day Observed at State House April 22



Commissioner Ruth Bramson delivers a presentation on pay equity.

Each year, women must work into the month of April to earn as much as their male counterparts did the previous year. Annually, this day is commemorated as Equal Pay Day, and was observed this year on April 22. The Massachusetts Coalition for Women's Wage Equality held an observance from at the State House to raise awareness about pay inequities as well as to empower and mobilize women to strive for economic change.

The Equal Pay Day observance featured Senate President Therese Murray, Senators Harriette Chandler, Dianne Wilkerson and Bruce Tarr discussing pending legislation around the issue of gender pay equity, specifically House Bill 2826/Senate Bill 2386, as well as the roles each senator has played and continues to play in advocating for the passage of this legislation.

Also featured were Massachusetts women who shared their personal stories and experiences about the gender wage gap. Panelists included Ruth Bramson, MCSW Commissioner and CEO of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, Patricia Ho of the American Association of University Women, and Diane Fay, a long-time professional in the field of library science.

"If you're looking for a women's issue, this is it," noted Senator Chandler. "The face of poverty is feminine. Instead of women enjoying their golden years, they are living the rusty years. Women power is the next step – YOU are the lifeline to make this happen."

Senator Wilkerson said she is committed to the issue because 76 percent of the households in her district are headed by women. "Pay equity would go a long way to close the poverty gap. We accommodate this issue by our silence because it is a difficult conversation to have. I want each and every one of you to carry the message to every woman you know. Now, during state budget negotiations, is the perfect time to be having the discussion and advocating for change."

Women's pay equity is an important issue for women nationally. At the current rate of change, working women will not achieve equal pay until after 2050. The repercussions of the wage gap can be seen clearly in Massachusetts where single-parent families headed by women represent 72% of the families living below the poverty line. This impacts women's ability to be economically self-sufficient and creates problems with their access to education, healthcare, childcare, housing, investments and retirement.

Senator Bruce Tarr, the only male legislator currently signed on to the bill, said the issue is one of fundamental fairness. "All people have the right to be treated fairly. Massachusetts has always been a leader and we position ourselves as a beacon of equality. We need to be sure that in fact we are being equitable with our public employees," which is why the HRD job classification bill is so important.

He continued that he views pay equity as an economic issue. "This is important to expanding the prosperity of the existing workforce AND we need to address the out migration of the 28-44 year olds the Commonwealth is experiencing. People need to know that if they work in Massachusetts that they will be paid fairly. What drives the state budget – income tax. If we were paying people fairly, we could be generating the tax revenue we need."



MCSW on Beacon Hill

Paid Sick Days

The Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition along with supporters across the state have taken a giant step towards helping the almost 1.5 million Massachusetts workers who lack a single guaranteed paid sick day. The Paid Sick Days act has been reported favorably by the Labor and Workforce Development Committee.

Paid Sick Days help both employees and employers: Businesses have more productive employees if they provide paid sick days. Healthy businesses and healthy families depend on this basic workplace protection.

Please look for action alerts with information about the status of this bill and steps that you can take to support its passage. For additional information about the bill or the Paid Leave Coalition, please contact Barbara Gutman at bgutman@jalsa.org.

Health Disparities

The Disparities Action Network has announced the inclusion of the EOHHS Office of Health Equity in a consolidated budget amendment (included below). The important health disparities initiative was not originally in the House Budget, despite its inclusion in Governor Patrick's FY 09 budget recommendations.

Led by Representative Byron Rushing and Representative Gloria Fox, the amendment was filed with over 40 co-sponsors who showed their commitment to the elimination of health disparities in the Commonwealth.

We still need your help to ensure funding for this new Office. The House language did not include a financial allocation and the DAN is now working to secure funding in the Senate Budget. Senate budget activity is anticipated during the week of May 19th. Stay tuned for an action alert in the coming weeks when you can reach out to your Senator.

Consolidated Amendment Language - For the creation of an Office of Health Equity within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services; provided further, the office may prepare an annual health disparities report card with regional disparities data, evaluate effectiveness of interventions, and replicate successful programs across the state; provided, further, the office shall work with a disparities reduction program with a focus on supporting efforts by community-based health agencies and community health workers to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities, including efforts addressing social factors integral to such disparities

For additional information about the budget amendment or the work of the Disparities Action Network, please contact Camille Watson at cwatson@hcfama.org.

MCSW Seeks Summer Interns

The MCSW welcomes college and graduate students to intern for course credits! If you, or someone you know is looking for an engaging and gratifying internship opportunity please forward a letter of intent and resume to mcsw@state.ma.us. The following internships are available:

Legislative Advocacy

Researching and monitoring state and national legislation that affects women; Supporting activities of the MCSW's Legislative Committee

Website Design

Creating and implementing new design for MCSW's website; maintaining website with updates and edits

Outreach and Advocacy

Assisting with the coordination of public hearings and regional councils; Supporting activities of the Outreach and Advocacy Committee

MA Women's Resource & Referral Network

Updating & augmenting the MCSW's referral database

Fundraising

Researching potential sources of funding; Grant writing; Special events planning

Communications/Publications

Writing & distributing press releases and media advisories, updating and/or creating media lists, and obtaining media coverage; Assisting with the Commission's monthly newsletter and Web site; Updating the Commission's printed materials

Worcester Regional Council Meeting Features Women Elected Officials



Millville Selectperson Diane McCutchen, Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong, State Representatives Anne Gobi and Jennifer Flanagan, Worcester Mayor Konstantina Lukes, and Commissioner Linda Cavaioi

The MCSW recently hosted a meeting of its Worcester County Regional Council. Held on Thursday, April 3 at the Sterling Inn, the meeting featured a panel discussion with elected female officials from Worcester County, including Senator Harriette Chandler, Representative Jennifer Flanagan, Representative Anne Gobi, Mayor Konstantina Lukes, Mayor Lisa Wong, and Selectperson Diane McCutcheon.

The meeting was attended by public sector and non-profit leaders, as well as local elected officials. Panelists spoke about their path in politics, the challenges of being female in public service, and the reasons they have decided to run for elected office. The presentations were followed by an interactive audience discussion, during which many attendees shared their experiences running for or serving in office.

The Worcester Regional Council will next convene in the fall. For additional information about the MCSW's Worcester Regional Council or councils located in other parts of the Commonwealth, please contact Jill Ashton, 617-626-6520 or Jill.Ashton@state.ma.us.

Update On Commissions Across the Commonwealth

In addition to the MCSW, Massachusetts is fortunate to have ten municipal and county women's commission working to advance the status of women. The work in which they are engaged is remarkable and the MCSW is pleased to report on it. For more information about these commissions and others in Massachusetts go to: <http://www.mass.gov/women/resources/MACommissions.htm>.

Brookline Commission on the Status of Women

- For the past two years the Brookline commission has received awards for their Women Who Inspire Us Event.
- The Commission is working on a follow-up networking event to our Women Who Launch - The Journey of Brookline Female Entrepreneurs for early September.
- Four times a week, members of the Commission lead a walking group, encouraging Brookline women to incorporate activity in to their schedules.
- Next week, a local artist is painting a watercolor portrait of the Commission. The artist is including this in her "Women of Brookline" show and hopes to have the portraits displayed in Town Hall.

Somerville Women's Commission

- Somerville Anti-Violence Taskforce, of which the Somerville commission provides staffing support, is working to address critical needs around domestic violence and sexual assault.
- The Anti-Violence Taskforce sponsors a monthly meeting with the Chief of Police with the Police Domestic Violence Unit, the Women's Commission, local provider - RESPOND, and local sexual assault provider - BARCC. Out of the monthly meeting a new project has developed: Domestic Violence High Risk Assessment Team. The team is looking at various models and is planning to select and institute an assessment team to help extreme cases of potential homicide.
- The Commission is convening the Somerville Financial Literacy Taskforce for its first meeting on May 10. The Taskforce will follow the same model as the Anti-Violence Taskforce - targeted and focused information, as well as an effective use of limited time and resources.
- The Commission is considering several projects for the Financial Literacy Taskforce's support, including Girls' Career and Mentor Kit Program, non-traditional career fairs, and money and budgeting for kids program.

Worcester City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

- The Worcester women's commission recently had the opportunity to recognize remarkable women and their work at Woman of Consequence and Young Women of Consequence Award Ceremony.
- Equal Pay Day was recognized by the Commission with a successful public event.

National Women's Health Week is May 11-17, 2008



The 9th annual National Women's Health Week will kick off on Mother's Day, May 11, 2008 and will be celebrated until May 17, 2008. National Women's Check-Up Day will be Monday, May 12, 2008.

National Women's Health Week empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action. The nationwide initiative, encourages women to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier and happier life.

During the week, families, communities, businesses, government, health organizations and other groups work together to educate women about steps they can take to improve their physical and mental health and prevent disease, like:

- Engaging in physical activity most days of the week
- Eating a nutritious diet
- Visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and preventive screenings
- Avoiding risky behaviors, like smoking and not wearing a seatbelt

National Women's Health Week reminds women that taking care of themselves is essential to living longer, healthier and happier lives. Women are often the caregivers for their spouses, children and parents and forget to focus on their own health. But research shows that when women take care of themselves, the health of their family improves.

For more information about National Women's Health Week activities in Massachusetts, visit www.womenshealth.gov/whw or call (800) 994-9662 (TTY: (888) 220-5446).

Article adapted from information on National Women's Health Week website.

May is National Osteoporosis Month

Osteoporosis is a major public health threat for 44 million Americans. Ten million individuals already have osteoporosis and 34 million more have low bone mass placing them at increased risk for developing osteoporosis and the fractures it causes. Eighty percent of those affected by osteoporosis are women. Known as "the silent thief," osteoporosis progresses without symptoms or pain until bones start to break, generally in the hip, spine, or wrist.

In 2006 the National Association of Commissions on Women embarked on an ambitious and important health initiative to reduce the debilitating effects of fractures resulting from osteoporosis in women. The primary strategy of the project is to empower NACW members as leaders or "champions" in osteoporosis education and awareness and to support them in their efforts to reach out to women in their communities. With corporate support, a Healthy BONES Resource Kit was developed to support NACW member commissions in their outreach efforts. Mindful that commissions for women vary in size, staff, and budget, the Resource Kit was designed to offer easy, ready-to-use tools and resources. **The MCSW, as a NACW member Commission, has the Resource Kit and is happy to make it available to any organization or group that would like to schedule appropriate programming. Please contact the MCSW at mcsw@state.ma.us or 617-626-6520 for more information.**

Learn more about this bone-thinning disease that causes serious fractures. Use the following questions to help determine your risk.

1. Do you have a small, thin frame and/or are you Caucasian or Asian?
2. Have you or a member of your immediate family broken a bone as an adult?
3. Are you a postmenopausal woman?
4. Have you had an early or surgically-induced menopause?
5. Have you taken high doses of thyroid medication for 3 or more months?
6. Have you taken, or are you taking, immunosuppressive medications or chemotherapy to treat cancer?
7. Is your diet low in dairy products and other sources of calcium?
8. Are you physically inactive?
9. Do you smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol in excess?

The more times you answer "yes," the greater your risk for developing osteoporosis. See your healthcare provider and contact the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) for more information.

Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the movement to advance women in the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place across the state in the coming weeks.

Wednesday, May 14 (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.): 5th Annual Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts

Location: Gardner Auditorium, Massachusetts State House (Boston)

Details: An afternoon of celebrating the nearly 300 women who have been selected as their community's Unsung Heroine. Please see our Unsung Heroines page at www.mass.gov/women/unsungheroines.htm for the complete list of the 2008 Heroines and our event sponsors. **Unfortunately, due to the number of honorees, guests and nominators, this event is not open to the public.**

Wednesday, May 14 (7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.): Cape & Islands Equal Pay Day Event

Location: Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and Islands (115 Enterprise Road, Hyannis)

Details: Come and learn about the wage gap and how it effects you and your family. Contribute to the discussion about how the gap can be reduced. Bring a colleague, friend or family member that should learn about wage inequity. Speakers from the following organizations will present on the topic of wage equality: The WAGE Project, Business and Professional Women, and the MCSW. A dessert and coffee reception will follow. Please RSVP to Kristin Whitfield at Kvwhitfield@gmail.com.

Monday, June 9 (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): Women, Wages and Work Policy Conference

Location: UMASS Boston Campus Center Ballroom (Boston)

Details: Join us for a day of dynamic speakers and interactive strategy sessions to reduce the wage gap between women and men. Speakers scheduled to appear are: Lilly Ledbetter, plaintiff in Supreme Court gender wage discrimination case; Evelyn Murphy, author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid as Much as Men and What to Do About It*; Rocio Saenz, President of SEIU Local 615; Ann Bookman, Executive Director of MIT Workplace Center; and Ellen Bruce, Director of the Pension Action Center at UMASS Boston. For more information on the conference, please visit: <http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/womenwages&work>.

Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue.

Special Thanks to Unsung Heroines Sponsors!

We would not be able to honor the wonderful Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts at the State House on May 14th without the support of the following organizations.

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